

## Sweet Sweet Nothings by orphan\_account

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Alternate Universe - Supernatural, Background Demogorgon (Stranger Things), Jonathan is a broody little shit, Jonathan is petty, M/M, Past Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler, Pre-Steve Harrington/Jonathan Byers, Steve is pettier, alternate take on d&d and the upsidedown, college student!Steve, flirty!Steve, ghost au, ghost! Jonathan, more than a ghost!jonathan

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**Summary:**

Steve's just moved into his new apartment.

He knows it is not new: The place is dirty, in need of a clean; it reeks of age. What he doesn't know is that the apartment isn't his either, it belongs to someone broodier, attached to the place, let's say, with a penchant to bring Steve a strange mix of frustration, confusion, fear and comfort. Comfort in the form of a silver glow, a soft and sweet embrace followed by a peppering of cold kisses.

He definitely didn't know that it was fucking haunted.

## 1. The Beginning

Honestly, he couldn't believe that he, Steve Harrington of all people, would end up in such a situation.

In order to make head or tail of his predicament, the story must be drawn from the very first instance, the first point of contact; the day Steve Harrington stepped his right foot into apartment 6B, tucked a few streets behind the college campus.

Steve had just lugged his first box of belongings up six flights of stairs. (He had almost crushed his hair upon seeing the hastily written 'Out of Order' taped onto the elevators. He had to remind himself of how much time and Farrah Fawcett hairspray he'd spent to resist dragging his fingers through his hair.) In his arms was a box illegibly labelled and Steve could swear that, as soon as he had stepped into his new home, it seemed to have been snatched from his arms and dropped onto the ground. Something (someone?) had pulled it from his weakened, exhausted grasp and unkindly let it fall to the ground.

It landed with a heavy thud, muffled by the worn carpeting, and Steve just stood there, the first of many tired huffs forced from his lungs. He glanced around the room, watched the musty scent drifting in the form of too many dust particles, breathed in the soft afternoon lighting simmering in all corners of the room. No one, nothing, zilch, nada.

Was he that tired that he didn't even realise his fingers, forearms, and biceps just giving out? He could have sworn that a soft scoff had drifted down the dimmed hallway, but again, a tired Steve was a loopy Steve.

And that was just 'Possibly Haunted by a Grumpy Old Man': Entry #1. He'd dismissed it as a figment of his fatigued state of being.

Unwisely.

Steve's second encounter (He started keeping a little notebook documenting the strange shit that happened around his apartment

straight after this occurrence) with stranger things happened on the very next day, twenty minutes into being conscious. He'd literally just rolled out of his makeshift bed (the couch) and stumbled his way to the bathroom to prepare for the day. Squinted at himself in the mirror. Ran fingers through the bird's nest he called hair. Yawned. Washed his fa—At least he attempted to wash his face.

With the way the bathroom was laid out, he was standing with the toilet to the right and the door to the left. He had cupped some water in his hand, shut his eyes tightly and thrown the freezing water all over himself – hair, face, pyjamas, feet; everything. A loud bang had startled his sleep addled brain. He opened his eyes to find both the door shut (Had he closed it?) and the toilet seat closed (That he definitely didn't do.)

Steve stood there, arms outstretched in preparation for a fight, wide-eyed and scanning warily. Nothing. What the fuck? He could swear there was no dodgy door or toilet seat in his bathroom? This time, he could not blame it on weariness – he'd just bloody woken up. Looking back at his own, confused expression in the mirror, he muttered and grabbed onto the basin edge.

“That was the weird sleep jump feeling right?” he watches the room through the mirror and his peripheral.

There was, again, no one in the room.

Now, Steve was a man, a mature man at that. He didn't scare easily and would always find more logical answers to things that happened around him. Lies. He was neither mature nor logical.

He did what every other man would do.

“Nance, Nancy, thank god you're awa—What do you mean who did I piss off this time? There is something wrong with this house. No, I didn't annoy the neighbours already – I'm hurt that you even think that I'm annoying, Nance. My hair is not a wild animal and it did not crawl off to start an army against me, stop laughing. I swear something is in the house; it closed the toilet and the door on me. Nance, it ripped a box from my hands. I'm not drunk or hungo—Nancy!” he whines into the phone.

Why the hell did he think it was a good idea to call his ex-girlfriend-but-current-best-friend, Nancy Wheeler? She cared for him – beyond lovers’ love, something akin to sisterly love, really – but she’d find every living moment to laugh and poke at him and his ‘idiosyncrasies’, as she put it. His momentary sulk was ended as a tinny, somewhat static sigh sounded in his ear. He could picture her, wrapped in a pastel sleeping gown and equally dainty sheets, the chord of her land-line twisted about her index finger. The epitome of ethereal beauty.

“Maybe it was just the apartment being poorly kept or something.”

There’s something more to her sigh. He knows; he could feel it through the hundreds of country roads that distanced him from Nancy. It screamed “Steve, I know you didn’t want to move away from Hawkins to go to college. I know you didn’t want to listen to your parents’ wishes. I know you wanted a simple life – but why don’t you just try for them?” It pierced into his suddenly tired frame, hollering “Steve, no son of the Harrington’s will waste their life away in small town Hawkins. The Harrington’s are only here because of restationing and prosperous conditions.”

It sounded awfully like his father’s voice.

The bastard.

In his moment of self-wallowing with Nancy passing comforting words and soft hopes for his bright future, Steve scrubbed his face. Agitation bubbled within him, a sense of impatience and an ineffable need to fidget, pace, scream and punch. He didn’t register a soft harrumph from beside him.

“I’ve got to go to school now, Steve. Going to make my way through this year and join you,” Nancy’s sweet voice echoed in his ear.

“M’Sorry Nance.”

He mumbled this, a slip of the tongue, unintended for Nancy’s ears.

“Don’t be. It’s got to be hard – just wait it out, Steve. I’ll be there”

The line cuts and another voice sounds – distant, but as soft as

Nancy's.

"I'm sorry. I won't scare you again."

It was an airy voice, more distant than Nancy's. Steve stood stunned, an ambiguous mix of fear and curiosity intermingled within his stomach.

"Who's this?"

"I'm sorry Steve Harrington."

There's that voice again: Fragile, honest, and coated heavily in an odd sense of loneliness.

Not static.

Like it was from someone right next to him.

'Jesus Christ this house is fucking haunted, I knew it,' Steve's mind races, a panic hammering through his soul. 'Ghosts aren't real. Get yourself together Harrington. They're not—'

"Steve? Are you okay?"

Nancy's voice returned, calling for Steve in concern. She questioned him, gently prodded him for answers, commented on the loss of the ray of sunshine that was once Steve Harrington. He calmed at that, her sisterly love.

They bade each other farewell and hung up the phone, Nancy left somewhat content that Steve hadn't lost his spirit; Steve left distracted, searching for that voice once more. It did not seem malevolent. If anything, it was apologetic, the voice.

That voice that seemed so close, so understanding and so willing to listen and wait for Steve. Not like Nancy, a girl who cared but couldn't *understand*. This voice *heard* Steve. Heard the whispers from the depths of his mind, his heart. The panic from earlier ebbed, flowed, from him. Whatever it was, it wasn't trying to hurt him. Steve hoped at least.

His moment of calm was interrupted by the hiss of the coffee machine. He turned slowly to face the kitchen behind him. There was no way that Steve had turned that machine on, let alone started any process to make a cup of coffee.

The apartment was fucking haunted and Steve had to stay here. God, he wanted to hide in a hole.

Maybe a smoke would do.

## 2. A Sighting

### Summary for the Chapter:

Steve suffers his way through more than a handful of ghostly experiences. They all seem to be pranks rather than true hauntings. Nancy still makes fun of Steve for the strange antiques that he has picked up since moving away for college. Mostly, he is annoyed at the spirit in his out. Every entry made sounds more like a complaint to the ethereal realm more than anything.

Aside from one, this is.

It took Steve multiple weeks of startled awakenings to realise what was happening. He didn't have a grumpy old man haunting him; instead, it seemed more likely that he had a middle-aged housewife who listened to punk rock.

Every morning, he would wake up at 7 AM and tossed around in his sheets before he stumbled into the bathroom. He would stare at his reflection, the same old face with the same old explosion of hair that needed taming. He would fiddle with the facet, wriggle sleepy fingers around tubes and spray cans.

He would also jump at the hissing sound of his coffee maker at 7.30 AM. Sharp.

Steve would always race out towards the kitchen, toothbrush hanging in his mouth and toothpaste dribbling down his chin.

Like the first time, no one was present. Just a freshly made cup of the holiest of liquids.

After a few days of freshly brewed coffee, he wasn't scared of his mysterious roommate anymore. (He tells himself that every night but Steve still jumped and crashed through his whole house every morning with an indescribable concoction of excitement and paranoia aching in his chest.)

One particular instance worth noting, at least to Steve, was Entry #25.

The morning had started, unlike most others. Steve had awoken an hour earlier than usual and lay in his bed staring stupidly at his ceiling. He watched a sliver of morning light dance about on the white paint as his thoughts peeked in and about the library of his memory.

In these moments, he enjoyed rummaging through the hundreds and thousands of shelves, draws and boxes within his mind – searched for something that simultaneously and ironically eased and cemented the hollowing experience of loneliness.

Today he had fond memories of Nancy's brother and his recalcitrant friends. Little brats, the bunch of them. A smile ticked onto his face as one particular moment stood out. Mike, Nancy's brother with a head of cow-licks, had started what was assumed to be a game of wizards and octopi (Yeah, no. Steve had no idea what they were playing since they kept screaming names like Demagondolas all the time) in the basement.

Their voices grew and echoed throughout the house, followed by the incessant whining of his friends, Lucas, Dustin and Will. Steve sat in the little fort of blankets and pillows with El, a sweet girl with more curls and smiles than imaginable.

He often played glorified babysitter for the kids while Nancy was out grocery shopping with her mum.

This memory was interrupted when a commotion of drums, guitars and a husky voice racketed from beyond his bedroom. Steve was up immediately, nearly landing on his face in the process. He dashed down the hallway with hands fisted tightly in his blankets, the only barrier between his naked self and the crisp morning air. The sight of the kitchen neared and Steve caught a ruffle of yellowy brown hair, almost golden when illuminated by the morning rays (An angel? He thinks but dismissed – angels weren't real, and if they were, *he* of all humans didn't deserve one.)

*God, there really was someone.*



When he got to the kitchen, there was, again, nothing. Steve threw his arms in the air, frustrated.

No hissing coffee machine, no steaming mug of coffee (much to his dismay), no one.

The music continued playing, however, and Steve turned to find his radio on, tuned to a punk rock station he'd never dream to be on. The Clash's '*Should I Stay or Should I Go?*' blasted for a mere second more before Steve thumped the device off.

Like every other occurrence, Steve grabbed his phone and dialled a familiar number, waiting through more dial tones than usual.

"Nancy, it happened again. This time I – I know what time it is – Listen, Nance, this time I saw something – No? Why should I apologize for waking you? This is important! Please, listen, Nance, Nancy, hey, I saw someone's hair. It was so pretty; golden even. No, they forgot my cof— Me without coffee does not mean I hallucinate... I swear I saw something."

Sleep slurred grumbles and complaints filled Steve's ear.

"Steve, I did say you could call me and you could talk about your supernatural barista friend of yours – but it's barely 7.30AM on a Saturday," Nancy seemed to mumble, her syllables dragging along as if she were about to drift off, running out of consciousness.

"Sorry, Nancy. It's just, whatever is happening at my place, it's so stupid. Coffee is being made, my books are being closed and stacked neatly and I can swear I did not hang my clothes in my closet last week – you've seen the state of my bedroom back home."

She laughed. A rich tinkling sound; the auditory representation of exasperated head shaking.

"Maybe you should try to catch it. You said you saw something today – plan your days out, watch the time, race around the house. Make it an adventure," she suggested and continued to propose different ways Steve could work this situation out.

Steve zoned out momentarily before an angry shout thundered itself

through his open window.

“For fuck’s sake! Mate put some damn clothes on – No one needs to see your withered dick!”

Nancy stifled an explosive and boisterous burst of laughter while Steve scrambled and grabbed the blanket from the ground, hurrying to the privacy of his bedroom the while muttering that his nude form was very much unwithered and very nice to look at.

His coffee wasn’t made for the following five days. His books were scattered through multiple rooms as if they were being moved further away to disappear from sight. The radio was shifted to Steve’s bedside and music from The Clash would play at the highest volume at the most inappropriate hours of the night.

The first time that Steve caught a glimpse of his mysterious resident was the first time he realised what they were like.

Petty as fuck.

And two could play that game. As the ghost’s actions escalated, (Just yesterday, Steve had found that his beloved baseball bat had been hammered full with nails. The day before, he’d found his sunglasses wedged within a light fixture hanging from the ceiling) Steve’s own responses escalated. He went from removing the batteries in the radio to waking up earlier to set the damn radio on pop tunes.

Of all people, Steve Harrington was stuck with a petty fool.

By the fortieth encounter, Steve had lost all fear of his ghostly guest. When he woke up, he’d whisper a soft 'Good Morning' before dragging his sleepy self to the bathroom. The hiss of the coffee machine would no longer startle him, his toothbrush scrubbing continuously. Some music, often some form of rock, would play in the background and Steve had found himself tapping along to it, humming the odd tunes throughout his day.

But just because his fear had been curbed, it did not mean that his curiosity had vanished. Rather, it had grown, it had manifested wildly, it had wrapped itself and rooted itself in his life in this

apartment.

Steve spat out his toothpaste, rinsed and splashed water against the lower half of his face to clear away any foam. He glanced at himself in the mirror, foregoing his usual hair products and meticulous routine. For now.

Leaving the bathroom, Steve walked carefully, hopping over trip wires and slipping by snares. He had followed Nancy's plans and suggestions. Now his house was filled with traps, odds and ends that Nancy had promised would help him catch his ghost and not make him look like a complete nut job. Lies. This was her extracting revenge for that one time he threw her into a pool.

But the more tricks Steve used in his apartment, the more his ghost decided to play with him.

Though his life would no longer be attacked by the loss of coffee or the generation of mess and chaos, Steve had woken up more than once to find the furniture in his room flipped around or his coffee stash exchanged for something decaffeinated or tables and chairs moved a handful of centimetres every few days.

Steve reached the kitchen and a smile stretched across his face at the sight of a mug with a tell-tale coil of steam rising from it. His latest attempt to catch the ghost was also on the table. A net of sorts was pieced together on the table, put together like some sort of sick puzzle.

(This is why Nancy makes the plans for him. His were always identified and laid out on the table like some failed trophy that the mysterious resident used to rub into Steve's face. Nancy's were left alone. Untriggered. Untouched.)

The line of salt, however, was left untouched (Sue him for reading those supernatural books.) Steve grasped the handle of his mug and inhaled the coffee.

Only for it to be spat out.

Rained onto the wall and countertop.

*Who the hell puts chilli powder into coffee?*

Eyes watering and tongue thoroughly scorched in more ways than one, Steve stumbled to the sink and fumbled with the tap. He ducked his head to gulp down the steady stream of water. Only to have jerked his head into the water, dousing himself with something overly cool, overly biting.

A yelp. A chorus of profanities. An unmanly cry.

That didn't matter though. His fucking balls were going to be frostbitten at this point.

Steve jumped and fidgeted with the strings of pyjama pants, holding the fabric at his hips. He danced across the room, something absolutely freezing sliding against his skin. His pants' strings had become suspiciously knotted, something he'd always been too lazy to do. Continued shouts of the blued nature of his nether regions bounced between the walls. Slow trickling tendrils of icy cold water slid down his thighs as the ice melted, soaking through the material of his pants, dripping onto the frigid kitchen tiles.

Once he got the strings undone, a handful of ice cubes shattered onto the ground. They sped in every direction, leaving trails of liquid behind.

Fucking ghost.

He's about to bend down, pants pooled around his ankles, to pick up the cubes. But a rather rude bird appeared out of thin air, right in front of his face. So his ghost was not only petty, it was rude: flipping middle fingers at people.

Message received, Steve thought bitterly to himself.

Entry #41 through to #70 brimmed with curses and long-winding paragraphs of annoyance and childish complaints.

Nancy had found it hilarious.

So had his dearest ghost, once the traps were removed. Steve could have sworn that he heard the bugger laugh. (But he was conflicted. It

had such sweet laughter. It didn't shimmer like Nancy's; it was warm and... he doesn't know how to describe it.)

Entry #70. Now this one Steve liked to flip back to. To reread. To re-live. To ponder and to remember.

All night, he felt eyes on him. Never menacing nor threatening. From the moment he opened his books to the second he pushed his aching body from the couch, something was watching him. He had been going to bed, a litany of yawns and stretches leading his way down from the living room to the bedroom as he felt the eyes as they continued to follow him. But he knew who it was. Well mostly.

And when Steve had slipped into bed, cocooning himself in cotton sheets, closed his eyes and let his mind drift, he'd felt it. Not the eyes. They'd faded into his subconsciousness long before the night had reached this hour of the day.

A cool press of lips upon his forehead. Fingers lightly dragged upon his cheekbones, seeming to brush strands of hair away.

Steve hadn't fallen asleep yet and his eyes shot open.

There, leaning over him was something unearthly. Someone with skin that blended in with the moonlight seeping in through a crack between his curtains. Someone with a messy mop of brown and gold (though it appeared more silver in this lighting.) Someone with angular features, making the figure both solemn and thoughtfully distanced. Eyes an unfathomable shade of dark brown, engulfing his attention, his concentration. Eyes widened in surprise. Blinking.

*Holy shit he's damn gorgeous.*

Then the image, the apparition, flickered and vanished.

Steve rushed for his bedside lamp, scrambling to turn it on. It flickered and the light dimmed and brightened a fair few times before illuminating the room. He searched the corners, the shadows and his blindspots from his place in his bed, an elbow propping his form upright.

*He's gone.*

He gave zero shits about most of the other ones from there. Those were just the ghost deciding it enjoyed seeing Steve's life filled with more pain and suffering than what it already contained. His coffee returned to something decaffeinated, his lights flickered more than ever, little knocks and the rustling of fabrics interrupted his sleep.

Sure, he was damn annoyed. He'd scream at his empty house for silence 'cause he wasn't scared of the pretty face anymore. He'd hugged his coffee beans to sleep. He'd called up Nancy to mope over the *person* that he had seen leaving a kiss on his forehead.

(His neighbours thought him insane, but since when was that news?)

But he was stuck dreaming about that face, that surprised look; that otherworldly being who haunted, no, graced his home.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

Once again, unbetaed. Feel free to message me with criticism and things that I didn't pick up when... editing.

I'm also sorry if the story doesn't go with how you'd imagine it. I'm really just writing on a whim here -- something spontaneous and off the top of my head, really.

Hope you enjoy!

Update: Next chapter may take a while... sudden idea popped up and I am quite psyched5/12/17

### **3. A Stumble and A Starting Run**

#### **Summary for the Chapter:**

Steve started, no, obsessed himself, with the search for the supernatural resident in his home. Though he knew that there was someone in the apartment, nothing really brought the figure out. A tentative push and pull seemed to be established with the fairy lights, but, apart from that, Steve was left alone.

And, sadly, loneliness is something which bit and tore into the core of this boy.

#### **Notes for the Chapter:**

This acts more as an interlude into the next few chapters. Moreso to start off a tentative relationship between Steve and Jonathan really. It doesn't add much plotwise, but, seeing that I hadn't updated this fic in so long and JUST BLOODY REALISED THAT I HAD WRITTEN SOMETHING TO CONTINUE IT RATHER THAN HAVING TO RUN BACK AND ACTUALLY PLAN MY SHIT FOR ONCE OML SAVE ME FROM MYSELF. So yeah, I'm giving you this, a short short short chapter.

Promise everything is already set for the story. Once I realised this snippet existed, I went to actually plan stuff out, so now, I am really just writing it and (minimally, probably at 3AM when I'm high on sleep deprivation or something) editing it.

His days became routine. More than before. He'd be out of the house by 8 AM and back by 6.30 PM. College had become an immovable mountain of stress, deadlines and demands as the semester progressed. His studies confined him, restrained him and trapped him within the same schedule, a never-ending cycle of torturously minimal sleep disrupted by perplexingly nerve-wracking study sessions.

Fortunately, Steve had a bubble of comfort back home.

Steve found some solace in his evenings, a handful of hours before bed where he'd experiment. Since the moment he had laid eyes on that pale face, Steve had been unable to forget it, *him*.

Once, he had played around with lights, seeing that they had flickered when the ghost had appeared. Now his rooms were lined with fairy-lights which blinked into existence whenever *he* was around. (Steve would later learn more about those lights, but this was much later.)

Twice, he had drawn lines of salt at different doorways, only to find a single light blinking on and off angrily (if it were possible to see light being angry). He had managed to trap his resident poltergeist in the living room and realised the effect that salt had. He'd removed the lines of salt immediately, vowing, muttering softly to the *empty* room around him, to never use such a trap again.

*He* had gotten revenge though – moved chairs and tables whenever Steve intended to sit or use them, somehow stopped the coffee machine from working. And this was among many other discoveries.

(But really, what was *his* problem? Who gets between a human and their dose of life? Coffee? Man, Steve needed that shit to *survive* on a day to day basis.)

His growing knowledge of the supernatural had come in handy one night where routines were broken. He had come home late, the first anomaly. He had come home bloody and beaten, the second anomaly. He had come home with the stench of second-hand smoke and booze. He had come home from a bar after fighting with some asshole for some forgotten reason.

Steve's night out with his friends had ended with a nasty bruise blossomed on his jaw, a split lip and a fair amount of cuts, bumps and scrapes from where he had fallen and crashed.

He had essentially rammed into his front door and fidgeted with his keys, all the while cursing at his inability to fight back, to defend himself, to be the man his father had wanted him to be. (These are



the nights where most of Steve's friends would imagine that he'd go home and drink some more, maybe fuck a girl as well. Be the *playboy* they all saw him to be. In reality, he'd sit somewhere in the house, maybe propped up by the wall in the hallway, dragging his fingers through his hair, over the cuts and aches of his face, silent tears just burning in the corners of his tired, tired eyes.)

But when he reached for his doorknob, it flung open from an unknown force.

His apartment was dark, save for a single fairy-light hung above his living room window.

*Oh shit.*

Under that light stood a dark figure and Steve's alcohol and adrenaline wracked mind could have sworn that they were slightly translucent. They turned and Steve caught a glance at a familiar face, lips parted to speak, eyebrows furrowed in concern. *A hauntingly beautiful face*, Steve thought (or said, he doesn't recall) and smiled sorrowfully.

It rushed towards him (glided with all the grace and elegance Steve could only dream of having) and wrapped cool fingers around his wrist, dragging his arms around an equally cold shoulder. Slowly, they shuffled towards the bedroom where the figure dropped Steve's now exhausted frame onto the mattress. He barely registered the soft glow of the lights which glimmered to life with each step he took.

"You know I fail at class, you know I barely have any worthy, and caring friends and now you know I'm shit at holding my ground in a fight. You must think I'm pathetic," Steve seemed to mumble this to no one. The cool fingers returned and shushed him, pushed him and tugged at him.

He was a bloody mess and he knew it.

The deep throb which grew at the back of his head was a sign for all the shit to come. Hangover, swollen features, the works. Steve drifted, in and out of consciousness, the pain and build-up frustration of the past year making itself known physically, emotionally,

mentally, spiritually. He was tired beyond the fight, beyond the studying. Someone fretted about him, dabbing stinging liquids and smelly ointments on his face and hands, wrapped and bandaged the bits and pieces which made up his pitiful existence.

It felt nice to have someone looking after him for once. That feeling ached in Steve's chest and he knew tears were starting to well in the corners of his eyes – oh, how tiny his life really was. How short and fleeting it would be. A cool finger brushed itself gently under his eyes, wiping away tears, patting wet eyes dry.

Loneliness, he realised as he trudged towards the boundaries of unconsciousness, defined and destroyed his life.

*“You’ve got me... Sort of.”*

Steve jolted from his sleep, his body a mixed sensation of life and death. He ached from something he didn't remember enough of (when he closed his eyes, he saw the fist coming. Then, nothing). His soul whimpered from whatever emotional meat grinder he had forced himself through (when he rubbed his bandaged palm against his chest, he heard someone talk of loneliness. And it sounded so damn much like himself. *Since when did he sound so small?*)

He cracked open his eyes to a darkened room, thankfully, with a dimmed glow ebbing from somewhere nearby. He doesn't turn to the source of the light immediately, opting to groan and mutter at himself as he rolled in bed, worked out the kinks in his joints and muscles, smoothed out the dressings littered across his body.

And when he finally paid attention to his surroundings, Steve sees *him*.

*“What happened?”*

Steve can't believe it – having barely spoken a word (nothing but an apology) since his arrival, *he* was now opening a conversation.

*“What, Steve Harrington, happened?”* And it sounded pissed off. It kept talking, recounted what must have been the events of the night prior.

But Steve could barely concentrate. After all the days and weeks of trying and failing to catch but a glimpse of his mysterious roommate, Steve was now watching as the guy sat in his room and quizzed him about things he didn't and probably wouldn't remember.

He took in the person – slightly worn, dark washed denim jacket paired with darker jeans, a light but muddied shirt, that ghostly (Steve chuckled to himself at that) pale skin, those sharp and analytical eyes teasingly shrouded by a mop of dark blond, set into that angular yet shy and innocent face. *By God*, was all Steve could think, *I barely know this guy – he is fucking dead – but how is he so breathtakingly handsome?*

“You’re fucking adorable.”

The words rolled off Steve’s tongue, interrupting the rant. His very form seemed to adjust itself despite the pain. A hand ran through to neaten his hair, a shove to the mattress brought him into a sitting position, a tilt of the head to admire the male in the corner. Steve didn’t realise he was fucking posing for some mystery man in his room.

(Nancy would have had a laughing fit over this if she knew: called him a love-smitten fool, tugged at his hair to catch his attention only to poke more fun at him, smiled caringly, knowingly as the boy she once loved had found something more.)

He was smitten, Steve. He barely knew the guy and yet, here he was, with his long-buried teenage boy reawakened, sighing in lovesick tunes, staring dreamily at the face he barely knew: imagining the possibilities and questioning the probabilities.

Something seemed to have happened though since the translucent figure now stood by his bedside and the little lights in Steve’s room glowed a piercing white. *Angry*, Steve thought, *no, protectiveness maybe... It’s a good look on him*. When *he* spoke, the lights seemed to twinkle, winking and fading with the ghost’s intonation.

“You are a goddamned idiot, Harrington.”

And that is that before the lights all flickered perilously and the room

was thrown into an abysmal darkness.

Steve didn't even realise he had flopped back onto his pillow, stupid, silly grin curled on his lips, a floaty, bubbly feeling dancing in his chest. He didn't register that *darkness* meant *he* had left. Steve was caught in his moment of complete and utter infatuation and adoration at first sight.

But when he blinked enough – (Prepared himself to flirt some more, really. Steve is a bit dumb like that when he found someone he liked.)

*He* was gone. Again.

Fuck.

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Steve fell deeper into the pit of seclusion, spending his days just wallowing in silence.

He got antsy, fidgety and lonelier than ever. When he got this antsy and inevitably drowned in the bone-chilling waters of isolation, (even Nancy had asked him to call less frequently, he was hindering her studies) he searched for ways to drift his way back to the shores of society.

(He *tried* is the main thing. It didn't go so well, but he stopped locking himself in his room, a bottle of salt in hand, head tilted towards the lights strung across his ceiling.)

He somehow cut down and managed to call Nancy at the bare minimum of twice per week, visited the local library over a dozen times picking out odd books on the supernatural and amassed a collection of objects which painted him all shades of crazy.

He had dived head first back into his quest to find *the boy* and he was working with so much vigour, pushing so much of himself into *this* that *he better get that damn pretty face to speak to him or else* –

He picked up all sorts of things, some ideas ranging from pure bat-shit crazy to somewhat reasonable.

Right now, he stood with his hands on his hips, staring proudly at his... collection. These consisted of essential pieces for the 'somewhat reasonable' plans suggested in various occultist writings Steve had read.

A few shelves of the one built-in wardrobe that lined his hallway had been emptied to make room for his new stuff. In one corner sat bags of salt and a stash of lights right next came his temporary supernatural book collection (okay they are just library books, but he needed to keep them somewhere), followed by boxes and boxes of strange bits and bobs.

These boxes had taken weeks of shopping, of flicking through random catalogues, of pressing and poking at the already agitated brains of shop attendants.

In one box, Steve had a pad of paper, a few pens and a mountain of scented candles and incense sticks.

(Now *that* was a field trip. On his rare day off, he had spent the morning wandering the city streets, peering through windows and looking like a general fool searching for candles and other smelly objects. He ended up calling Nancy, who spent a good ten minutes interrogating Steve, before telling him to either waltz into a large department store or find the typical, small, hippie corner store specialising in such goods.

He ended up at the hippie store.

Steve had literally stood outside the store for an hour, staring at the patterns of sacred geometry and clashing psychedelic colours which decorated the windows. He honestly doubted that anything from this dingy hole in the wall would help him, but it was worth a shot.

He then spent another handful of minutes gagging and sneezing and coughing when he opened the door and got a whiff of *too many spices and smells* and '*Jesus Christ someone please open a goddamn window*'.

Once he had adapted to whatever that store was filled with, he started to shuffle between the messy shelves which threatened to topple over with every move Steve made. Right next to what Steve

was certain were crystals and gems for witchcraft, Steve found a wall of candles. Some were stacked on top of each other, raw wax dyed rich hues of the rainbow. Others were poured into glass jars, the lids tied with twisted ropes of hemp. Steve sighed.

From there, he went to town, picking and smelling and making faces at scents he liked and scents he didn't like.

The cashier, some strangely laidback guy with equally strange smelling musk, just blinked and poked at the candles before slurring a surprisingly low price.)

In another box, Steve had different types of Ouija Boards.

(Now, these he knew were a mix of dangerous and total utter horseshit. But he was guessing that this came down to the brand or store that he got it from. Two of the three Ouija Boards were bought from toy stores. (Why these things were sold as toys really didn't make sense to Steve. If you don't want dead kids playing with living kids, don't give the living kid the tool to get to the dead kid who was probably evil?))

The last one was from a second-hand store.)

Steve's mental cataloguing of his new belongings was interrupted by a soft and amused scoff sounding from beside him, effectively stealing his attention away for the rest of the day.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

UNLIKE what I normally do, I have read this through and edited bits and pieces. However, this is still rather raw and unbetaed so bear with me.

Hit me up with comments and the likes to let me know what you like/dislike or any other criticism you may have. I know I'm shitty at updating but this should be more... consistent than before.

I intend to finish this fic this month CAUSE I HAVE ANOTHER ONE TO ATTEND TO OML. (Yes I am pretending that I have finished the Stonathan Week

tics because I actually could not think of anything for the last prompt. I've written at least 3 different complete  $4 + 1/5 + 1$ 's for it and I didn't like a single one. We will see how that goes. But I have something else I want to do so :DDDDDDDD )

## 4. Now A Conversation

### Summary for the Chapter:

In the process of testing his new spirit phones (Steve called them that, labelled the damn box with that and smiled proudly at it for a minute or two), he ends up talking to his ghost. First, he messed around and dropped a mountain of candles, then he found out that it was a boy by the name of Jonathan Byers.

Among other things, this is.

At this point, each and every encounter, minor or not, had blended with the last. In fact, Steve had lost count of which number he reached. He had abandoned, forgotten that little book, shoved it under his pillow one day and let it fall behind his bed. (It had gradually filled itself with odd scribbblings of what Steve saw: the ruffle of soft blond, the handsome sweep of cheekbones, the slight and downward pout of lips. It'd turned into a teenage girl's ramblings of adoration and infatuation, so he wouldn't really want anyone to see it.)

Now, now that he knew he had someone willing to show himself and who was quite possibly just shy, Steve was prepared to do anything and everything to just *talk* with him. Which is how he ended up collecting odd bits of information and purchasing odd bits of paper, wood and candles. All the fucking candles.

(Nancy had scoffed into the call when they were planned. Something about how he would be too dopey to hold a proper conversation. Something about how his brain reduced itself to shitty pickup lines whenever he truly liked someone. Something about how Steve would end up with a spiteful poltergeist as soon as he opened his mouth.)

The first thing Steve tried was automatic writing.

According to that one old book from the library, automatic writing was supposed let him communicate with spirits by releasing the '*conscious mind*' and clearing any '*thought processes*' to become the



'medium' for whatever was haunting his home. (Gah, there were too many funky terms to dig through. Steve just thought of this as a form of daydreaming and planned to let his hand wriggle when it wanted.)

Sounded easy enough.

(The ancient book also made a vague reference to creating some sort of special environment with smelly candles and smellier incenses, so Steve got a tonne of those.

And then proceeded to pray for the survival his lungs.)

Because of that damn book, Steve now puttered around his living room where he had already thrown a pad of paper and a bundle of pens on the couch. He rushed towards the open wardrobe and loaded his arms with candles, deciding to pick the scent once he had sat down. With his arms currently filled with a precariously balanced stack, Steve grumbled and complained to himself, waddling more than walking.

And, because he was Steve Harrington, he stumbled when his foot caught the edge of his coffee table. Making everything in his arms topple to the ground in unceremonious thuds. A mess of tumbling candles, some with their lids rolling away, matchsticks are strewn across the carpet and the odd lighter now gracelessly decorated his floor.

"Use candles, they said. It'll make you calm and find *a clear path for your spirit guide*," he mocked.

He then whined this to himself, eyes focused on the still rolling candles.

"Fuck you, spirits."

The minimal contact with the ghostly blond over the past week left Steve in a predicament. He had all but given up on making proper contact, on *holding a damn conversation with the boy*. He knew that the other was still around, having heard soft laughter, felt the lightest breath on his neck and had *seen the damn fairy lights go off*. But even he had his limits. Frustration was fraying his resilience and he was

ready to kick the damn candles and other stupid junk out of his window.

That was until all candles and other rollable objects stopped.

They didn't *come* to a stop, no. It must be understood, they just stopped. Something or *someone* stopped it and Steve grew ecstatic at the thought of the *boy* being around still.

"Wait, wait, wait – C'mon talk to me. Let me get the—"

Steve rushed for a paper and pen, one knee on the sofa to balance himself.

The book said to start the conversation off. Okay.

**Hi.**

He stared at his messy chicken scratch for handwriting.

Nothing. Not even a twitch of the pen.

Maybe he had to be sitting. The book had mentioned creating a space for the mind to calm down. Steve does an awkward shuffle and twist. With his butt on the soft cushion, pen scratched the paper again.

**I know you are there.**

Nothing again.

Steve continued to stare at his writing, glared at the emptiness, the lack of response. He could feel his jaw clenching unconsciously and a coil of exhaustion reigniting behind his eyes. Breathing deeply, Steve then closed his eyes and threw the writing materials across the coffee table, listened to the rustle of paper as it fell onto the ground.

*Fuck this.*

Throwing his head back against the couch, hands dragging across his face to rub away his building annoyance, Steve groaned to himself. There was that building *sensation* in him. It felt similar to anger and hatred, but it didn't burn. It seemed to remain in the lower half of his

body – an incredible need to move or he'd kill and scream and punch. It sent a prickle up his spine, like when some scratchy fabric was irritating soft skin. The nerve numbing need to *pull himself away from bullshit and throw himself into an endless sleep.*

He was going to open his eyes to get up, prepare himself to trudge into his bedroom, collapse into bed face first and scream. Scream at nothing, at something, at everything.

(To beg for something, for someone, for *him*.)

But then it registered to him.

Something crackled through his emotionally muffled hearing; the paper never stopped rustling.

Steve kept his eyes closed, scared that whatever he was hearing would vanish when he opened his eyes. He didn't want to peer into his living room to find the paper on the ground, the pen rolled under the table and no one around. He didn't want to find another failure.

The rustling did stop, but Steve then heard the quick clicking of a pen. Closer.

Closer.

A cold brush of fingers to the cheek.

His eyes flew open and then crossed to focus on the words written underneath his own.

Right in front of him was his chicken scratch. Followed by neatly printed handwriting.

## **Hello Steve Harrington**

It seemed almost shy, blotted ink on the 'H' of the word 'hello'. Like someone had bitten the inside of their cheek and contemplated whether they'd leave a note or not, then snagged a minuscule amount of flesh and hastily scribbling it down anyways. Even the paper seemed to shift a bit, like someone was nervous, fidgeting maybe.

Steve was stunned. Speechless.

Sure, he registered the writing, but behind it — Right in front of him stood a figure, much clearer than he had ever seen. A darkly clad figure, worn denim jacket on top of a faded, grey cotton tee, the faintest outline of objects behind him peeking through. His head was tilted downwards as if they were staring at the ground, the fringe of dark blond shifting from their side-swept look to fall and cover his eyes.

Very shy.

Steve's stupefied state deepened, wanting to just smile dumbly, gaze fondly and sigh sugar soaked complements at the man, ghost, whatever. He sat there for a long minute, hands rested limply on his lap, mouth agape as he took in *who* stood mere centimetres ahead of him.

"Damn. I had smooth one-liners planned but I forgot them all when I saw how gorgeous you were."

Again, his brain to mouth filter proved its non-existence.

The paper dropped into Steve's lap, muffled by the indignant grumble which followed the painfully surprised upward jolt of the head. Steve was graced with alluring brown eyes, adorably furrowed brows and an ever-present frown formed more like a pout than anything else. He felt the corner of his lip curl into a smug smile, fingers reaching over tentatively to grasp the others. To drag the other the sit right next to him. To play with *his* fingers and *flirt*.

Steve was knocked out of this momentary infatuation when his hand passed straight through the boy's palm. It left a peculiar sensation; a tingle of sorts. At first, Steve felt a shock of cold, but then it seemed to fade and a blushing warmth ebbed from his palm and settled in his chest. As if offering an apology for the chill that it had sent up his spine.

He looked at his hand.

He looked at the wide-eyed boy still standing in front of him.

He swiped his hand through the boy's hand again.

It left him flinching at the shock of iciness before his smile grew when the warmth settled within him. It was so welcoming, a gentle heat much like the content and satisfaction that rested in his stomach when he had taken large gulps of steaming tea on a winter's day.

Steve would have passed through the hand again for that warmth, that welcoming feeling, that *embrace* – if it weren't for the fact that said hand had clenched into a fist.

Meekly, guiltily, Steve peered up at the ghost. An unimpressed glare met Steve's gaze, effectively making Steve want to shrivel up into himself and curse. A downward turn of the lip, more of that frowny pout, had his confidence march along, grin growing wider.

"Hello."

He ended up leaning back on the couch, casual confidence in his look; 'oozing sensuality and masculinity'. (There's a story there. Nancy had walked out of the room and wouldn't stop laughing. Steve took it as a compliment.)

Steve had one arm tossed over the back of the couch, the other rested on the side to prop up his head. A slight tilt of the head allowed Steve to stare up at the boy's piercing, strangely soulful and *alive* eyes.

"*Steve*," the boy's expression barely changed in his exasperated acknowledgement. Steve could have sworn the boy was blushing, soft pink dusted across pale cheeks, brushed further down his neck — but the slight transparency made it hard to pinpoint quick movements and subtle changes in colour.

It could just be Steve's overactive and excited imagination, but let him be.

"Do you have a name, or can I call you mine?"

He watched the other bristling and staring blandly at Steve. He really should have just stuffed his foot into his mouth and stopped the continual flow of total utter bullshit. It was what scared (or annoyed)

his ghost away last time. Watching for any movement of facial muscles, Steve peered up at the standing figure as a conflicted puddle of awe and nervousness.

A curl of the lips.

*“Do you only speak with crappy one-liners?”*

A curious tilt of the head, fringe shifted alongside, strand by strand.

Steve made sure to stay silent.

A sigh, the small smile disappeared.

*“Jonathan. Jonathan Byers,”* he, Jonathan, said, arm stretched out waiting for a handshake. Steve saw a pale wrist, a blurred medical tag slipped loosely around it, turning and shuffling up and down the appendage. Okay, that is a lie. He *notices* the damn tag, but he spent more time raking his gaze from the hand, following it up towards the soft features of *his ghost*.

“Well, Jonny boy, it is my greatest pleasure to meet you,” Steve was unable to stop the grin on his face and grasped the hand, suddenly solid.

Feeling brave, he pulled it towards his lips and pressed a kiss to the back of Jonathan’s palm.

It phased. Lost solidity. Quickly slipped through Steve’s hand. Returned to play with the button on the sleeve of his denim jacket.

Now that was definitely a blush. A bright red, a deep glow, the biting of the lips – Steve couldn’t be happier. He wriggled and pushed himself to lean on one side of the couch, gestured for his new-found friend to sit beside him, eagerly patting the cushion.

“Flirty is my natural state. But c’mon, c’mon, c’mon, sit,” he urged, expression suddenly serious, less jovial “I gotta know – Why’re you here making me coffee and shit?”

Any severity of tone is lost when Steve remembered, recalled the past months, jostled and spluttered, “Wait no, fuck that why the fuck did

you shove ice down my pants? Or pull them down? The guy across from me still glares and threatens to cut my balls off!”

The other did eventually sit, hesitantly, awkwardly and timidly tucked against the arm of the sofa, feet planted on the ground, hands rested on knees, avoiding Steve’s gaze. He stared straight ahead until Steve’s outburst and Steve noticed a slight tremor in the shoulder, an uncontrollable twitch of lips and a short spurt of sound.

Steve sat up, now worried that he had been too emotive and frightened the boy so. That was until the bursts of sound increased in length, hiccups and hitches revealing Jonathan’s soft laughter, the curl of an arm around his stomach a dead giveaway.

*The bastard was laughing at him!*

Without any thought or inhibition, Steve leapt at the other, hands grabbing *solid* shoulders, fingers digging into muscle. He threw his body weight from his seated position and shoved the other into an awkward position against the end of the couch. Face pressed into the pillow on the back of the couch, arm tucked uncomfortably against his side, body twisted at the waist.

Steve glared playfully at Jonathan, lips curled into a smug smile, eyes glinting in mischievousness.

”Laugh all you want. It is on Byers.”

For a split second, Steve is distracted by the wide-eyed stare, definitely surprised and a little frightened at Steve’s explosive reaction. A rich brown with flecks of darker, richer golds. He got lost in the moment, like he always did with people, with creatures that enamoured him, bewitched him with their ethereal beauty.

Like Nancy - her deceptively chaste gaze, her simmering ambition alongside her unmatched badassery. Hiding her levelheadedness, her determination, her ability to prioritise her future above all else. She’d known before him that his admiration was but admiration - that she wasn’t what he really *wanted* and, more importantly, *needed* in life.

Like Stacy from tenth grade - her unbridled confidence, her unending

desire to reach further and to know *more*. Elements which silently nurtured her watchfulness, her perceptiveness and her sharp intuition. Stacy'd understood from the very beginning that they were unbelievably similar, that Steve saw himself in *her* and was attracted to her way of *hearing* Steve. That one day, he'd shut *his* own voice out, *her* voice out, and search for a new one.

They had all *listened* in their own way.

And now there was Jonathan Byers. Ghost boy filled with so many secrets, so much of *himself* to show and to be explored. So much for Steve to fall for easily, inexplicably - and be left behind.

Steve's mirthful attempt to start a wrestling match ended with his thoughts, brows now furrowed and confused.

"How did you end up here, Jonathan?" he whispered, "Dead and now in ghostly form. What happened to trap you in this house?"

Steve crashed into the soft cushion of his sofa, the once shocked individual vanishing from underneath him. Jonathan phased out of tangible existence and moved around the room, walking slowly, purposefully, to maintain Steve's watch. Steve stood; Jonathan picked up the notebook, their combined scribbles a stark contrast on the white paper. Jonathan turned the paper in his hand, staring at their words with a slight wonder and indefinite sense of worry. He held the book out to Steve.

*"If you want to talk, Steve, leave me a note or just speak to me directly. Don't play with these things,"* Jonathan pushed the notepad further towards Steve, dangling it by his fingers at the spiral binding at the top of the paper, *"They're not as stupid or harmless as you think they are."*

Steve was alone in his living room once more.

Jonathan was gone again.

Bummer.

**Notes for the Chapter:**



What a lie I am -- updating regularly? Wow, haven't heard bigger bs from my mouth in a while. To be fair though, I have scrapped the storyline yet again and Stevie is going monster hunting. With the possibility of another fic on the way -- or I'll just cram it into this one so expect a sequel or a load of chapters to come.

That aside, there are 2 fics coming along. One that is partially written and angsty (i had tossed this at someone on tumblr and they were all coolios so i was all why-not-ios. And then I've got a rewrite of something from Stonathan Week that I've been really looking forward to do. I REREAD LORD OF THE RINGS FOR THIS BEAR WITH ME.

but yeah. normal stuff - unbetaed etc.

### **Author's Note:**

Based off a tumblr prompt:

"You've been haunting my room since forever and making things move and shit and by now I'm not even that scared dude just please shut the fuck up and let me sleep" and,

"Additionally, whoops you got pissed now and decided to show yourself like a badass or something but honestly bro do you have any idea how fucking cute you are"

Also, unbetaed; but enjoy!